The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt

Contents

Preface

I. A Modern Mystic: David Myatt And The Way of Pathei-Mathos
II. A Modern Pagan Philosophy
III. Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos
IV. An Overview of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Part One: Anti-Racism, Extremism, Honour, and Culture
Part Two: Humility, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

V. Classical Paganism And A New Metaphysics

Appendix I. A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos
Appendix II. Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture
Appendix III. From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous
Appendix IV. Preface: One Perceiveration
Appendix V. Appreciating Classical Literature
Appendix VI. Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos
Appendix VII. The Concept of Physis

Preface

The essays included in this book - two written by JR Wright, and the others by R. Parker, and reproduced with their permission - not only provide an introduction to the philosophy of pathei-mathos as advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 but also place that philosophy into perspective, which is of a modern mystical philosophy with roots in Greco-Roman culture. Which somewhat distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other contemporary philosophies and from the weltanschauungen of various individuals during the past three or more centuries. Myatt's philosophy is thus part of the Western philosophical tradition.

It is worth noting that in his more recent (2014-2015) essays Myatt has described his 'way of pathei-mathos' not as a philosophy but as a weltanschauung, writing in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* [1] that

> "What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual."

Given Myatt's use of various terms from ancient Greek I have, for this third edition, included as appendices the Preface from his 2020 compilation *One Perceiveration* [2] and his 2019 text *Appreciating Classical Literature* [3] as well as his 2019 text *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, [4] and his *The Concept of Physis* which was included in the fifth, 2018, edition of his compilation *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. All of which additions further explain his mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos.

I have also updated references to his translations of tractates from the Corpus Hermeticism given the publication in 2017 of a book [5] containing his translations of and commentaries on the following eight tractates: I Ποιμάνδρης; II Ιερός Λόγος; IV Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς; XIII Ερμού του τρισμεγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας.

I have updated some of the links in the text including in the appendices, and in the footnotes the number begining 978 - which generally follows the title of a printed book and its date of publication - refers to the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) as for example in the reference *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

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Third Edition, 2021

[1] The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some*

Personal and Metaphysical Musings. 2014.
[2] https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/dwmyatt-one-perceiveration-v5.pdf
[3] https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/appreciating-classical-literature/
[4] https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/
[5] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

I. A Modern Mystic

David Myatt And The Way of Pathei-Mathos

Philosophy of a Modern Mystic

The 'way of pathei-mathos' (πάθει μάθος) is the name given, by David Myatt himself, to his own particular *Weltanschauung*, his own perspective about life, which he has expounded in numerous essays since 2011, and which perspective or personal philosophy he developed after he "had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) numinous way." (1)

Myatt has conveniently collected most of the essays expounding his personal philosophy into four books: *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2013; *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos,* published in 2013; *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, published in 2014; and *Sarigthersa*, published in May 2015. These works amount to some 240 pages.

In one essay he makes it clear that the way, or the philosophy, of pathei-mathos is

> "simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings." (2)

As described in those four collections of essays, Myatt's particular perspective, or philosophy of life is, in my view, fundamentally a mystical one because based on a personal intuitive insight about, a personal awareness of, the nature of Reality. A mystic accepts that there is, or there can arise by means such as contemplation, a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcends the temporal.

Myatt personal mystic insight is essentially two-fold: (a) that "we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life," (3); and (b) of "the primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

According to Myatt, this awareness of our connexion to other life is that arising from empathy; more, precisely, from the faculty of empathy, which he explains is an awareness of, and a sympathy with, other living beings, and by means of which we can

> "understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being." (4)

Less metaphysically, he writes that empathy

> "inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." (5)

According to him, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos:

> "Empathy is, as an intuitive understanding, what was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. That is, from and by a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering. An understanding manifest in our awareness of the numinous and thus in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; the distinction made, for example in the past, between θεοί and δαιμόνων and mortals."

(5)

One feature of Myatt's mysticism is his somewhat prolific use of ancient Greek terms and expressions; a use which he states is because

> "the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." (5)(6)

Pathei-Mathos And Physis

Since - as the name for his 'way' or philosophy implies - the concept of pathei-mathos is fundamental, as is the concept of physis, it is necessary to understand what Myatt means by both these concepts.

1. Pathei-Mathos

In several of his essays Myatt writes about this concept in some detail. For example:

> "The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning 'learning from adversary', or 'wisdom arises from (personal) suffering'; or 'personal experience is the genesis of true learning'.
>
> However, this expression should be understood in context, for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law – this new guidance laid down for mortals – is pathei-mathos.
>
> Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority – that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

> In many ways, this Aeschylean view is an enlightened – a very human – one, and is somewhat in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity." (7)

> "A personal pathei-mathos [is] one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation- of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

This reliance on pathei-mathos makes his philosophy non-dogmatic, personal, and interior, especially given the connection Myatt makes between pathei-mathos and empathy; for the type of knowing both provide is a-causal in nature and is only manifest "in the immediacy-of-the-moment" and therefore "cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social." (2)

As Myatt explains, there is a 'local horizon' to both empathy and pathei-mathos:

> "The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." (8)

In further explaining what he means by the 'acausal (wordless) knowing' of empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt introduces another fundamental aspect of his philosophy, the culture of pathei-mathos:

> "What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be

> embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." (8)

In addition he points out that such 'acausal knowing' is supplementary and complimentary to that 'causal knowing' which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science. (9)

2. Physis

In his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (10) Myatt explains that he uses the term physis, φύσις, contextually to refer to:

> (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature '- that is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
> (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
> (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
> (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
> (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

According to Myatt - echoing as he does a concept found in several tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (11) - the supposed necessity of denoting (or defining) ourselves, as an individual, in terms of either 'the masculous' or 'the muliebral' (12) is incorrect and distances us from understanding our human physis. That is, he suggests that every individual has (or can develop) a masculous and a muliebral aspect to their physis and that it is natural for us to develop both these aspects of our character, which development - and the balanced physis which results - would take us away from the dominating suffering causing patriarchal ethos of the past three thousand years, incline us toward empathy, compassion, and honour, and thus lessen the suffering which we inflict on other humans and on other life. (13) In respect of which development Myatt asks a rhetorical question:

> "Will [it] take us another three thousand years, or more, or less, to live, world-wide, in societies where fairness, peace, and compassion, are the norm because the males of our species - perhaps by heeding Fairness and not obliging Hubris, perhaps by learning from our shared human culture of pathei-mathos - have

personally, individually, balanced within themselves the masculous with the muliebral and thus, because of sympatheia, follow the path of honour. Which balancing would naturally seem to require a certain conscious intent.

What, therefore, is our intent, as individual human beings, and can our human culture of pathei-mathos offer us some answers, or perchance some guidance? As an old epigram so well-expressed it:

θνητοῖσιν ἀνωΐστων πολέων περ οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νόου ἀνθρώποισι

"Of all the things that mortals fail to understand, the most incomprehensible is human intent."

Personally, I do believe that our human culture of pathei-mathos - rooted as it is in our ancient past, enriched as it has been over thousands of years by each new generation, and informing as it does of what is wise and what is unwise - can offer us both some guidance and some answers." (14)

A Complete Philosophy

According to academic criteria, in order to qualify as a complete, and distinct, philosophy - in order to be a *Weltanschauung* - a particular philosophical viewpoint should possess the following: (i) a particular ontology, which describes and explains the concept of Being, and beings, and our relation to them; (ii) a particular theory of ethics, defining and explaining what is good, and what is bad; (iii) a particular theory of knowledge (an epistemology), of how truth and falsehood can be determined; and (iv) it should also be able to give or to suggest particular answers to questions such as "the meaning and purpose of our lives", and explain how the particular posited purpose may or could be attained.

Given that Myatt's 'way of pathei-mathos' provides the following answers, it does appear to meet the above criteria and thus could aptly be described as a distinct modern philosophy.

i) Ontology

"The ontology is of causal and acausal being, with (i) causal being as revealed by phainómenon, by the five Aristotelian essentials and thus by science with its observations and theories and principle of 'verifiability', and (ii) acausal being as revealed by συμπάθεια - by the acausal knowing (of living beings) derived from faculty of empathy - and thus of the distinction between the 'time' (the change) of living-beings and the 'time' described via the measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of things." (2)

ii) Epistemology

"The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment." (2)

iii) Ethics

"Of personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develope what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." (2)

iv) Meaning

"It is wise to avoid causing or contributing to suffering not because such avoidance is a path toward nirvana (or some other posited thing), and not because we might be rewarded by God, by the gods, or by some divinity, but rather because it manifests the reality, the truth - the meaning - of our being." (15)

"Of understanding ourselves in that supra-personal, and cosmic, perspective that empathy, honour, and pathei mathos - and thus an awareness of the numinous and of the acausal - incline us toward, and which understanding is: (i) of ourselves as a finite, fragile, causal, viatorial, microcosmic, affective effluvium of Life (ψυχή) and thus connected to all other living beings, human, terran, and non-terran, and (ii) of there being no supra-personal goal to strive

> toward because all supra personal goals are and have been just posited - assumed, abstracted - goals derived from the illusion of ipseity, and/or from some illusive abstraction, and/or from that misapprehension of our φύσις that arises from a lack of empathy, honour, and pathei-mathos.
>
> For a living in the moment, in a balanced - an empathic, honourable - way, presences our φύσις as conscious beings capable of discovering and understanding and living in accord with our connexion to other life." (2)

A Spiritual Way

Myatt's answers to the questions of "the meaning and purpose of our lives" and of "how the posited purpose might be attained" reveal - as he himself admits in many of his essays - that his philosophy of pathei-mathos embodies a cultured pagan ethos similar to the paganism manifest in many of the writings of Cicero. In his essay on *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt approvingly quotes Cicero (in Latin) and paraphrases the explanation of meaning which Cicero gives in the second book of De Natura Deorum:

> "The classical weltanschauung was a paganus one: an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceiveration that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself.
>
> Furthermore, this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." (16)

But Myatt's philosophy is certainly not a modern restatement of a type of paganism that existed in ancient Greece and Rome. For his philosophy is concerned with the individual and especially with their interior life; with their 'acausal' connection - through what Myatt terms the cultivation of the virtues of empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour - to Being and thence to other life, sentient and otherwise. This marks it as a spiritual way, but one devoid of 'abstractions' and dogma. As Myatt writes:

> "To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and

> 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.
>
> This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertitude of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical, seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.
>
> For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." (17)

According to Myatt, empathy and pathei-mathos incline us - or can incline us - toward humility (18), for

> "personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity." (19)

In other words, humility expresses the raison d'être of Myatt's philosophy, born as this philosophy is from his own pathei-mathos.

A Modern Gnostic

A Gnostic is someone who seeks gnosis: wisdom and knowledge; someone involved in a life-long search, a quest, for understanding, and who more often than not views the world, or more especially ordinary routine life, as often mundane and often as a hindrance. In my view, this is a rather apt description of Myatt during his idealist and 'extremist' decades; decades (1968-2009) which are reasonably now well-known and documented in various academic sources.

It is thus no surprise that Myatt has been described as an "extremely violent, intelligent, dark, and complex individual," (20) as "a British iconoclast who has lived a somewhat itinerant life and has undertaken an equally desultory intellectual quest," (21); as "arguably England’s principal proponent of contemporary neo-Nazi ideology and theoretician of revolution," (22); as having undertaken various "Faustian quests", (23); as "a fierce Jihadist," (24) and as having undertaken a "Siddhartha-like search for truth" and "a global odyssey which took him on extended stays in the Middle East and East Asia, accompanied by studies of religions ranging from Christianity to Islam in the

Western tradition and Taoism and Buddhism in the Eastern path." (25)

Thus, his

> "philosophy of πάθει μάθος [...] is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture." (26)

As Myatt has explained in various writings - such as in parts two and three of his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, published in 2013, (27) - it was his own painful 'learning from practical experience' which compelled him to develop his philosophy of pathei-mathos:

> "What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance – the human necessity, the virtue – of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism – usurping such humanizing personal love – replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice."

My considered opinion is that it is this redemptive 'Faustian' learning from practical (mostly extreme, and both 'dark' and 'light') experiences which distinguishes Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos from the many academic and/or armchair philosophies proposed by others in the last two hundred years. For Myatt has "been there, done that" and - so it seems - learned valuable lessons as a result, making his philosophy much more than either intellectual speculation by some academic or something devised by some pseudo-intellectual dilettante.

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NYC
2015

Notes

Abbreviations

NWPM: The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos (Fifth edition, 2017). 978-1484096642

REPM: Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos (2013). 978-1484097984

EFG: One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings (2014). 978-1502396105

SARIG: Sarigthersa (2015). 978-1512137149

1) Myatt, David (2012). *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*. The essay is included as an appendix in Myatt's autobiography, *Myngath*, published in 2013. (978-1484110744)

2) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. EFG.

It should be noted that all four printed books detailing Myatt's philosophy are idiosyncratic in terms of size, being 8.5 x 11 inches which is larger than the standard paperback size of 6 x 9 inches.

3) *The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy*. NWPM.

4) *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*. NWPM.

5) *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

6) Myatt's frequent and somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term Hellenic requires some explanation. As the context often suggests, he generally means the culture of ancient Greece in general, from the time of Homer to the time of Euclid, Aristotle, and beyond. He is not therefore referring to what has academically come to be termed the later Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) period distinguished as that period is, somewhat artificially, from the earlier culture of classical Greece.

That said, he does rather confusingly and on occasion make such a distinction - as in his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* [SARIG], and in his translation of and commentary on the Pymander tractate - between classical Greece and Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) Greece.

7) *Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way*. NWPM.

8) *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. SARIG.

Myatt technically defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as

> "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries." *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. EFG.

9) *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. NWPM.

10) Included in *Sarigthersa*.

11) Myatt's translation of, and extensive commentary on, the Pymander tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum was included in his 2017 book *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 978-1976452369, and which book also includes translations of and commentaries on tractates II, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII.

12) In his *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (included in NWPM) Myatt defines masculous and muliebral as follows:

> Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.
>
> The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

13) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG. See also his answer to the question in his *Some Questions For DWM*, included in EFG, which question begins: "In your book 'Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination' you wrote that extremists have or they develope an inflexible masculous character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculous nature, the masculous ethos, of extremism..."

14) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG.

15) *The Consolation Of A Viator*. EFG.

16) EFG.

17) *Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress*. REPM.

18) *Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life*. NWPM.

19) *Numinous Expiation*. REPM.

20) Raine, Susan. *The Devil's Party* (Book review). *Religion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, July 2014, pp. 529-533.

21) Jon B. Perdue: *The War of All the People: The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism*. Potomac Books, 2012. p.70-71. 9781597977043

22) Michael, George. *The New Media and the Rise of Exhortatory Terrorism.* Strategic Studies Quarterly (USAF), Volume 7 Issue 1, Spring 2013.

23) Michael, George. (2006) *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, p. 142.

24) Author Martin Amis several times described Myatt as "a fierce Jihadist". For instance, in his book *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157.

According to Professor Wistrich, when a Muslim Myatt was a staunch advocate of "Jihad, suicide missions and killing Jews..." and also "an ardent defender of bin Laden." Wistrich, Robert S, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010. 978-1-4000-6097-9.

See also the report of a UNESCO conference in 2003 [Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2] where it was stated that "David Myatt, the leading hardline Nazi intellectual in Britain since the 1960s [...] has converted to Islam, praises bin Laden and al Qaeda, calls the 9/11 attacks 'acts of heroism,' and urges the killing of Jews. Myatt, under the name Abdul Aziz Ibn Myatt supports suicide missions and urges young Muslims to take up Jihad."

25) Kaplan, Jeffrey (2000). *Encyclopedia of white power: a sourcebook on the radical racist right*. Rowman & Littlefield, p. 216ff; p.512f

26) *A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

27) 978-1484854266.

II. A Modern Pagan Philosophy

It is my contention that the philosophy - the weltanschauung - advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 {1}, and named by him as 'the philosophy of pathei-mathos', is not only a modern expression of the Western mystical tradition {2} but also a pagan philosophy.

In respect of mysticism, a mystic is a person (i) who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or of Reality, 'the cosmic order', or (ii) who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal. This apprehension certainly applies to Myatt's philosophy, based as it is on what Myatt terms 'the acausal knowing' resulting from empathy and pathei-mathos.

In respect of paganism, it is generally defined - from the classical Latin *paganus*, and ignoring the modern re-interpretation of the word by self-described contemporary pagans - as meaning "of or belonging to a rural community" in contrast to belonging to an urban or a more organized community (such as a religious Church), from whence derived the later (c. 1440 CE, post Morte Arthure) description of a pagan as a non-Christian, a 'heathen' (Old English hǽðen), and thus as describing a person who holds a religious belief which is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim.

Myatt however provides his own, rather more philosophical, definition, relating as his definition does to the paganism of the Western, Greco-Roman, tradition. Thus Myatt - paraphrasing a passage from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and quoting the original Latin - defines paganism as

> "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceiveration that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself: Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoi nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum – nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." {3}

Which apprehension of the κόσμος certainly describes Myatt's philosophy where

> "there is a perceiveration of our φύσις; of us as - and not separate from - the Cosmos: a knowledge of ourselves as the Cosmos presenced (embodied, incarnated) in a particular time and place and in a particular way. Of how we affect or can affect other effluvia, other livings beings, in either a harmful or a non-harming manner. An apprehension, that is, of the genesis of suffering and of how we, as human beings possessed of the faculties of reason, of honour, and of empathy, have the ability to cease to harm other living beings. Furthermore, and in respect of the genesis of suffering, this particular perceiveration provides an important insight about ourselves, as conscious beings; which insight is of the division we mistakenly but understandably make, and have made, consciously or unconsciously, between our own being - our ipseity - and that of other living beings, whereas such a distinction is only an illusion - appearance, hubris, a manufactured abstraction - and the genesis of such suffering as we have inflicted for millennia, and continue to inflict, on other life, human and otherwise." {4}

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in Myatt's philosophy on balancing within ourselves 'the masculous' with 'the muliebral' in order that we may not only perceive the unity beyond what Myatt terms 'the illusion of ipseity' {5} but also become as harmonious as that unity; a unity achievable - according to Myatt - be developing and using our faculty of empathy and by cultivating the virtue of personal honour, which virtue manifests, 'presences', that self-restraint - that moderation - described by the Greek term εὐταξία {4}.

Masculous And Muliebral

One of the unique features of Myatt's philosophy, and thus of his paganism, is the distinction he makes between the masculous and the muliebral aspects of our human nature. In *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis* he writes of the necessity of the muliebral virtues

> "which, combined, manifest an enantiodromiacal change in our human physis and which change, which balancing of the masculous with the muliebral, consequently could evolve us beyond the patriarchal ethos, and the masculous societies, which have been such a feature of human life on this planet for the past three thousand years, genesis as that ethos and those societies have been of so much grieving." {6}

For according to Myatt

> "it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise."

{7}

In effect Myatt is suggesting that the solution to the problem of suffering - the answer to the question of 'good and evil' - lies not in politics, nor in religion, nor in supra-personal social change, and certainly not in revolutions, invasions, and wars, but in ourselves by us as individuals valuing and cultivating the muliebral virtues. What this means in practical terms - although Myatt himself does not directly spell it out but rather implies it - is men appreciating women, treating them honourably and as equals, and cultivating in their own lives muliebral virtues such as εὐταξία, empathy, and compassion.

This emphasis on the muliebral, and thus on internal balance, distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other philosophies, ancient and modern, most of which philosophies are imbued with a decidedly masculous ethos; and none of which emphasize personal virtues such as honour and empathy, and the ethics derived therefrom; and none of which have an ontology of causal and acausal being.

Which Myattian ontology is crucial to understanding such an emphasis on the muliebral and the enantiodromiacal change in our physis resulting from us perceiving and understanding (via empathy and pathei-mathos) the unity beyond the unnecessary division between the masculous and the muliebral and the other divisions we make based on abstractions, denotatum, and ipseity.

As Myatt explains,

> "empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." {8}

A Modern Paganism

Contrary to contemporary neo-pagan revivalism - with its made-up beliefs, practices, romanticism, rituals, and lack of philosophical rigour - Myatt has not only produced a modern pagan philosophy with a unique epistemology, a unique ontology, and a unique theory of ethics {9} but also continued and creatively added to the classical - that is, Western, pre-Christian - pagan and mystical traditions.

For Myatt has asked

> (i) if Being - whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μονάς - can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.
>
> That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' - or been created by - acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings - such as ourselves - an aspect or emanation of acausal Being? {8}

His answer:

> "formulating such a question in such terms - causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of - is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal', and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέᾳ) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us, both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing." {8}

Which led Myatt to suggest that Being, and our own physis, can be discovered - known and understood - by empathy and pathei-mathos which both by-pass abstractions, denotatum, and opposites, and enable us to appreciate the numinosity of Being.

What therefore is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? According to Myatt

> "it is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {8}

Which is a rather succinct description of the essence, the ethos, of the Western pagan and mystic traditions where each individual acquires a personal, non-dogmatic, apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal.

R. Parker
2016

{1} David Myatt's philosophy is outlined in four collections of essays published between 2013 and 2015. The works are as follows:

i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} The words 'mystical' and 'mysticism' are derived from the term mystic, the etymology and English usage of which are:

i) Etymology:

° Classical Latin mysticus, relating to sacred mysteries, mysterious;
° Post-classical Latin, in addition to the above: symbolic, allegorical;
° Ancient Greek μυστικός, relating to sacred mysteries;
° Hellenistic Greek μυστικός, initiate; plural, μυστικόι; also: symbolic,
allegorical, spiritual, esoteric, mysterious, occult;
° Byzantine Greek (5th century CE) μυστικόν, mystical doctrine.

ii) English usage:

° noun: symbolic, allegorical (c. 1350);
° noun: an exponent or advocate of mystical theology;
° noun: a person who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or 'the cosmic order' (mundus), or who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal;
° adjective: esoteric, mysterious, [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']
° adjective: of or relating to esoteric rites [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']

{3} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. The essay is included in Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{4} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. qv. Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt discusses 'the illusion of ipseity' in several of his essays, including *Towards Understanding The Acausal* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*) and *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions* (qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*).

{6} qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{7} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{8} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{9} His ontology, ethics, and epistemology are described by Myatt in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*).

III. Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

Along with the faculty of empathy and pathei-mathos, central to David Myatt's philosophy {1} is what he terms the virtue of honour, writing that

> "personal honour – which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία – [is] (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.
>
> Of how such honour – by its and our φύσις – is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment." {2}

Thus, like both empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt conceives of honour not as an abstraction {3} – not in any idealistic way – but as "an expression of our own φύσις; and a person either has this 'faculty of honour' or they do not." {4} Myatt goes on to suggest that such a faculty – like the faculty of empathy – can be consciously developed; that

> "through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develope what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {2}{5}

Myatt is at pains to point out, several times, not only that honour, empathy, and pathei-mathos, are related:

> "What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that – unlike a form [ἰδέᾳ, εἶδος] or an abstraction – it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {6}

but also that what is revealed, known, and understood, and sometimes acted upon, is always personal; with empathy, pathei-mathos, and honour emphasizing

> "the importance of living in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment", sans the pursuit of some ideal or of some assumed perfection; with what is 'good' being not some abstraction denoted by some faith, dogma, ideal, ideology, or by some collocation of words, but rather is a function of, a wordless revealing by, our personal, our individual, empathic horizon, by our pathei-mathos, and by the collected human pathei-mathos of millennia manifest as that is in the culture of pathei-mathos. Which revealing is that what-lives is more important that any ideal, than any abstraction or form, with 'the good' simply being that which does not cause suffering to, or which can alleviate the suffering of, what-lives, human and otherwise.
>
> Thus the 'meaning' of our physis, of our living, so revealed, is just that of a certain way of living; a non-defined, non-definable, very personal way of living, only relevant to us as an individual where we – appreciating our human culture of pathei-mathos, and thus appreciative of art, music, literature, and other emanations of the numinous – incline toward not causing suffering and incline (by means of empathy, compassion, and honour) toward alleviating such suffering as we may personally encounter in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment". {6}

Honour In Practice

What all this amounts to, in respect of honour, is that there can be no supra-personal 'code of honour' or 'code/theory of ethics' – written or oral – which an individual seeks to uphold and live by, since honour in Myatt's philosophy is not an ideal to be followed or aspired to. A person thus does what is

honourable – in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment" – because it is their nature, a wordless part of their way of life, to do so; to behave in such a manner that there is, in such a moment, a natural balancing of Life itself, since the personal virtue of honour is

> "a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις [hubris], in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη [balance, harmony]." {7}

That is, the judgement regarding when and how to act is and can only be an individual one, in and of the moment. In addition, Myatt emphasizes several times that compassion – and the desire not to cause suffering – should be balanced, and are balanced, by and because of honour:

> "This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν [discernment] and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.
>
> This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.
>
> Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets." {7}

Honour therefore, in my view, humanizes Myatt's mystical philosophy, making it an individual and quite practical and a decidedly pagan way of life {8} where the development of and the use of individual judgement – in respect of others and situations – is paramount. A development – a cultivation of discernment – by means of empathy, personal pathei-mathos, and learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos.

That Myatt has framed his philosophy in terms of Greco-Roman culture – so evident for instance in his use of Greek terms and his copious quotations from Greek and Roman authors – makes it a distinct modern philosophy which has not only "continued and creatively added to the classical – that is, Western, pre-Christian – pagan and mystical traditions" {9}, but has also, through the centrality of personal honour, of the muliebral virtues {10}, and of humility {11}, restored the Western ethic of gallantry.

R. Parker
2016

{1} The philosophy of pathei-mathos is described by David Myatt in the following four collections of essays:

i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis*. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} Myatt, in his *Towards Understanding Physis* (included in *Sarigthersa*), defines an abstraction as "a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median."

In later essays, such as *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, he explains that denotatum – which he uses in accord with its general meaning, which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted" – and abstractions both conceal physis and thus prevent us from understanding our own being, our nature as mortals.

{4} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt, in his essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

Of δίκη, Myatt, in his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos,* writes:

> "Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on. A personified Judgement – the Δίκην of Hesiod – is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244)."

However, in several of his essays – such as *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*, included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*, Myatt also uses δίκη to mean 'fairness', quoting Hesiod and providing his own translation and which translation mentions both honour and a learning from adversity:

> σὺ δ᾽ ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ᾽ ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
> ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
> 215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς
> ἐγκύρσας ἄτῃσιν: ὁδὸς δ᾽ ἑτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
> κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ᾽ ὑπὲρ Ὕβριος ἴσχει
> ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω
>
> You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
> Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
> Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
> The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
> For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
> Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

In his footnotes to his translation Myatt explains:

> δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In [Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι], as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice' [...]
>
> δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

{6} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. Note that here, as elsewhere in other quotations from Myatt's writings, I have provided – in square brackets [ ] – a translation of some of the Greek terms Myatt uses.

{7} *The Numinous Balance of Honour*. Included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos.*

{8} I have outlined the pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy in *A Modern*

Pagan Philosophy.

{9} R. Parker. *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*. e-text, 2016.

{10} See the *Masculous And Muliebral* section of my *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*.

{11} Humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Myatt in his 2012 essay *Pathei-Mathos – A Path To Humility* explains that he uses the term

> "in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.
>
> Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) – the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν – of those qualities and virtues – that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace."

IV. An Overview of David Myatt's Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Part One
Anti-Racism, Extremism, Honour, and Culture

It is now generally acknowledged that David Myatt - once renowned as an ideologue {1} and as a 'theoretician of terror' {2} - has rejected the extremism that dominated his life for some forty years, thirty of which years were spent as a neo-nazi activist and ten as a "fierce Jihadist" {3} and apologist for Al-Qaeda {4}.

According to his own account {5} this rejection was a consequence of pathei mathos - primarily, the suicide of his partner in 2006 - and which learning

from grief resulted in him developing what he termed a philosophy of pathei-mathos centred around personal virtues such as humility, compassion, empathy and personal honour {6}{7}. In addition he has written several interesting, if rather neglected, essays in which he discourses about culture and - politically relevant today - about topics such as extremism. In these discourses, which apply his philosophy to the topics discussed, he is at pains to point out that he presents only his "personal, fallible, opinion about such matters" and that these opinions derive from his decades of "experience of extremists and my decade of study and personal experience of, and involvement with, Islam." {8}

Culture, Civilization, and Politics

Given Myatt's predilection during his extremist decades, and especially as a neo-nazi ideologue, for pontificating about both 'culture' and 'civilization', his mature view of such things, resulting from his recent seven or so years of interior reflection following his learning from grief {9}, are of especial interest.

For he writes that:

> "The very usage of the term civilization, for instance, implies a bias; a qualitative often pejorative, prejudiced, assessment and thence a division between something judged 'better than' - or 'superior to' or 'more advanced than' - something else, so that 'to civilize' denotes "the action or process of being made civilized" by something or someone believed or considered to be more distinguished, or better than, or superior to, or more advanced.
>
> In common with some other writers, my view is that a clear distinction should be made between the terms culture, society, and civilization, for the terms culture and society - when, for example, applied to describe and distinguish between the customs and way of life of a group or people, and the codes of behaviour and the administrative organization and governance of those residing in a particular geographical area - are quantitative and descriptive rather than qualitative and judgemental. It is therefore in my view inappropriate to write and talk about a European or a Western 'civilization' [...]
>
> [T]he essence, the nature, of all cultures is the same: to refine, and develope, the individual; to provide a moral guidance; to cultivate such skills as that of reasoning and learning and civility; to be a repository of the recorded/aural pathei-mathos, experiences, and empathic understanding of others (such as our ancestors) over decades, centuries, millennia, as manifest for example in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and often in the past in myths and legends and religious allegories. A recorded/aural pathei-mathos and empathic understanding - a human learning - which teach the same lessons, whatever the culture, whatever the people,

> whatever the time and whatever the place. The lesson of the importance of a loyal love between two people; the lesson of the importance of virtues such as εὐταξία and honour; the lesson of the need to avoid committing the error of hubris. The lesson of hope, redemption, and change. And the lesson concerning our own nature [...]
>
> Ultimately, the assumed or the perceived, the outer, differences do not matter, since what matters for us as human beings capable of reason and civility is our shared humanity and the wisdom that all cultures guide us toward: which wisdom is that it is what is moral - it is what keeps us as mortals balanced, aware of and respective of the numinous - that should guide us, determine our choices and be the basis of our deeds, for our interaction with other human beings, with society, and with the life with which we share this planet.
>
> As outlined in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, my personal view is that the criteria of assessment and judgement are the individual ones of empathy, reason, and the presumption of innocence; which means that abstractions, ideations, theories, and categories, of whatever kind - and whether deemed to be political, religious, or social - are considered an unimportant. That what matters, what is moral, is a very personal knowing in the immediacy-of-the- moment so that what is beyond the purveu of our empathy, of our personal knowing, knowledge, and experience, is something we rationally accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. Hence, and for example, individuals and people we do not know, of whatever faith, of whatever perceived ethnicity, sexual orientation, or perceived or assumed or proclaimed culture - whom we have no personal experience of and have had no interaction with over a period of causal time - are unjudged by us and thus given the benefit of the doubt; that is, regarded as innocent, assumed to be good, unless or until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, as individuals, proves otherwise [...]
>
> What matters are our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." {8}

Myatt's emphasis is thus on the individual; on their interior life, and their personal interaction with others in what he terms, in his philosophy of pathei-mathos, the immediacy of the personal moment:

> "Since the range of our faculty of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and since

> the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is and are direct and personal, then the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide is of the empathic scale of things and of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. That is, what is so revealed is not some grand or grandiose theory or praxis or philosophy which is considered applicable to others, or which it is believed can or should be developed to be applicable to others or developed to offer guidance beyond the individual in political and/or social and/or religious and/or ideological terms; but rather a very personal, individual, spiritual and thus interior, way. A way of tolerance and humility, where there is an acceptance of the unwisdom, the hubris, the unbalance, of arrogantly, pejoratively, making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience." {10}

There is, therefore, a rejection of involvement with politics:

> "Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means." {11}

In line with the virtues of his philosophy, Myatt is scathing regarding extremism in general:

> "One of the worst consequences of the extremism of extremists - of modern hubris in general - is, or seems to me to be, the loss of what is personal, and thus what is human; the loss of the empathic, the human, scale of things; with what is personal, human, empathic, being or becoming displaced, scorned, forgotten, obscured, or a target for destruction and (often violent) replacement by something supra-personal such as some abstract political/religious notion or concept, or some ideal, or by some prejudice and some often violent intolerance regarding human beings we do not personally know because beyond the range of our empathy.
>
> That is, the human, the personal, the empathic, the natural, the immediate, scale of things - a tolerant and a fair acceptance of *what-is* - is lost and replaced by an artificial scale posited by some ideology or manufactured by some *τύραννος*; a scale in which the suffering of individuals, and strife, are regarded as inevitable, even necessary, in order for 'victory to be achieved' or for some ideal or plan or agenda or manifesto to be implemented. Thus the good, the stability, that exists within society is ignored, with the problems of society - real, imagined, or manufactured by propaganda - trumpeted. There is then incitement to disaffection, with harshness

> and violent change of and within society regarded as desirable or necessary in order to achieve preset, predetermined, and always 'urgent' goals and aims, since slow personal reform and change in society - that which appreciates and accepts the good in an existing society and in people over and above the problems and the bad - is anathema to extremists, anathema to their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature and to their hubriatic striving." {12}

All this amounts to viewing matters - events in the external world, and our relation to other humans - in terms of two principles rather than in terms of politics, ideology, dogma, or revolutionary social change. The first principle is personal honour; the second what Myatt terms 'the cosmic perspective', of which perspective Myatt writes:

> "The Cosmic Perspective reveals a particular truth not only about the Anthropocene (and thus about our φύσις as human beings) but also about how sustainable millennial change has occurred and can occur. Which change is via the progression, the evolution – the development of the faculties and the consciousness – of individuals individually. This is the interior, the a-causal, change of individuals wrought by a scholarly learning of and from our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, by our own pathei-mathos, and by that personal appreciation of the numinous that both the Cosmic Perspective and the muliebral virtues incline us toward. This aeonic change voids what we now describe by the terms politics and religion and direct social activism of the violent type.
>
> There is thus a shift from identifying with the communal, the collective – from identifying with a particular contemporary or a past society or some particular national culture or some particular causal form such as a State or nation or empire or some -ism or some -ology – toward that-which has endured over centuries and millennia: our human culture of pathei-mathos. For the human culture of pathei-mathos records and transmits, in various ways, the pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, manifest as this sustainable millennial culture is in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and in the experiences – written, recorded, and aural – of those who over the centuries have appreciated the numinous, and those who endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were fundamentally, interiorly, changed by their experiences." {13}

Given this perspective, and given that personal honour "cannot be extracted out from the living moment and our participation in the moment" {7} and is a necessary virtue, then Myatt's philosophy, while somewhat redolent of Buddhism, Taoism, and the Catholic contemplative tradition, is rather unique in that the personal use of force (including lethal force) in the immediacy of the moment is justified in personal defence of one's self or of others, since

> "the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding

> and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη." {14}

Given the mention of wu-wei in many of Myatt's recent writings, it is no surprise that Myatt admits (or, rather, overstates) his debt to Taoism:

> "According to my limited understanding and knowledge, I am not expressing anything new here. Indeed, I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I am only re-expressing what I intuitively (and possibly incorrectly) understood nearly half a century ago about Taoism when I lived in the Far East and was taught that ancient philosophy by someone who was also trying to instruct me in a particular Martial Art." {13}

It is therefore possible to speculate that the archetypal follower of Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos - if there were or could be such followers of such a personal philosophy of life - might be akin to one of the following: (i) a reclusive or wandering, or communal living, mystic, concerned only with their interior life and/or with scholarly study, yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (ii) someone outwardly ordinary who was in, or who was seeking, a loving relationship, and who - compassionate and sensitive and cultured - was unconcerned with politics or conventional religion, and yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (iii) someone with an interior sense of what is honourable whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is honourable, fair, and just; and (iv) someone who - compassionate and empathic by nature - whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is compassionate and who would - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death.

In Myatt's view, such individuals would be acting in a wise way - in accord with the aforementioned cosmic perspective - since:

> "The only effective, long-lasting, change and reform that does not cause suffering - that is not redolent of ὕβρις - is the one that changes human beings in an individual way by personal example and/or because of πάθει μάθος, and thus interiorly changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what

urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate. That is what, individually, changes or rebalances bad φύσις and thus brings-into-being, or restores, good φύσις." {15}

For:

> "It is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate." {11}

Extremism, Racism, And Prejudice

In Myatt's philosophy, the personal knowing of others provided by empathy and the self-knowing that pathei-mathos reveals replace the categorizations by which we have assumed we can know and understand others and ourselves:

> "Hitherto, the φύσις of beings and Being has most usually been apprehended, and understood, in one of three ways or by varied combinations of those three ways. The first such perceiveration is that deriving from our known physical senses – by Phainómenon – and by what has been posited on the basis of Phainómenon, which has often meant the manufacture, by we human beings, of categories and abstract forms which beings (including living beings) are assigned to on the basis of some feature that has been outwardly observed or which has been assumed to be possessed by some beings or collocation of beings.
>
> The second such perceiveration derives from positing a 'primal cause' – often denoted by God, or a god or the gods, but sometimes denoted by some mechanism, or some apparently inscrutable means, such as 'karma' or 'fate' – and then understanding beings (especially living beings) in terms of that cause: for example as subject to, and/or as determined or influenced by or dependant on, that primal cause.
>
> The third such perceiveration derives from positing a human faculty of reason and certain rules of reasoning whereby it is possible to dispassionately examine collocations of words and symbols which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocations are considered to be – or which are regarded by their proponents as

> representative of – either knowledge or as a type of, a guide to, knowing.
>
> All three of these perceiverations, in essence, involve denotatum, with our being, for example, understood in relation to some-thing we or others have posited and then named and, importantly, consider or believe applies or can apply (i) to those who, by virtue of the assumption of ipseity, are not-us, and (ii) beyond the finite, the living, personal moment of the perceiveration.
>
> Thus, in the case of Phainómenon we have, in assessing and trying to understand our own φύσις as a human being, assumed ipseity – a separation from others – as well as having assigned ourselves (or been assigned by others) to some supra-personal category on the basis of such things as place of birth, skin colour, occupation (or lack of one), familial origin or status (or wealth or religion), some-thing termed 'intelligence', physical ability (or the lack thereof), our natural attraction to those of a different, or the same, gender; and so on." {16}

In Myatt's view, extremism - whether political or religious - makes some category an ideal to be strived for or returned to, since:

> "All extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed. Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.
>
> The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its opposite." {17}

Thus in racism individuals are assigned to, associated with, some 'race' with the various 'races' assigned a qualitative value - describing their 'worth' - based on what some ideology or some ideologue state or believe is their contribution to 'civilization' and on how useful or harmful they might be to those deeming themselves 'superior'.

This is immoral, according to Myatt, not only because it is dishonourable but because of the primacy of empathic, of personal, knowing:

> "Everything others associate with an individual, or ascribe to an individual, or use to describe or to denote an individual, or even how an individual denotes or describes themselves, are not relevant, and have no bearing on our understanding, our knowledge, of that individual and thus - morally - should be ignored, for it is our personal knowing of them which is necessary, important, valid, fair. For assessment of another - by the nature of assessment and the nature of empathy - can only be personal, direct, individual. Anything else is biased prejudgement or prejudice or unproven assumption.
>
> This means that we approach them - we view them - without any prejudice, without any expectations, and without having made any assumptions concerning them, and as a unique, still unknown, still undiscovered, individual person: as 'innocent' until proven, until revealed by their actions and behaviour to be, otherwise. Furthermore, empathy - the acausal perception/knowing and revealing of physis - knows nothing of temporal things and human manufactured abstractions/categories such as assumed or assigned ethnicity; nothing of gender; nothing of what is now often termed 'sexual preference/orientation'. Nothing of politics, or religion. Nothing of some disability someone may suffer from; nothing of social status or wealth; nothing regarding occupation (or lack of one). Nothing regarding the views, the opinions, of others concerning someone. For empathy is just empathy, a perception different from our other senses such as sight and hearing, and a perception which provides us, or which can provide us, with a unique perspective, a unique type of knowing, a unique (acausal) connexion to the external world and especially to other human beings.
>
> Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris.
>
> In practice, therefore, in the revealing of the physis of a person, the political views, the religion, the gender, the perceived ethnicity, of someone are irrelevant. It is a personal knowing of them, the perception of their physis by empathy, and an acceptance of them as - and getting to know them as - a unique individual which are important and considered moral; for they are one emanation of the Life of which we ourselves are but one other finite and fallible

part." {12}

However, Myatt's analysis of extremism goes much further. Based on his forty years of personal experience he considers that the extremist is a particular type of person "by nature or becomes so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination" and that

> "it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of the masculous at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and kampf is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war and/or violence and competition." {17}

Thus, in Myatt's philosophy, the extremist is hubriatic: unbalanced because lacking in - or having rejected or suppressed - the muliebral virtues which are or which should be an essential part of our human nature and the genesis of all culture; with the need for such muliebral virtues, for such a balance, and the necessity of culture, among the important things that 'our culture of pathei-mathos' informs us about {18}. Little wonder, then, that

> "it is [our] shared human culture of pathei-mathos that extremists of whatever kind, and those who advocate -isms and -ologies, scorn and so often try to suppress when, for however short a time, they have political or social or religious power and control over the lives of others. It is this human culture of pathei-mathos which – at least according to my experience, my musings, and my retrospection – reveals to us the genesis of wisdom: which is that it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have – thousand year following thousand year – caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {13}

Furthermore, according to Myatt:

> "Given the masculous nature and the masculous ethos of extremism, it is no surprise that the majority of extremists are men; and given that, in my own opinion, the predominant ethos of the last three millennia – especially within the societies of the West – has been a masculous, patriarchal, one it is no surprise that women were expected to be, and often had no option but to be,

> subservient, and no surprise therefore that a modern movement has arisen to try and correct the imbalance between the masculous and the muliebral [...]
>
> [Yet] it is only by using and developing our faculty of empathy, on an individual basis, that we can apprehend and thence understand the muliebral; [for] the muliebral can only be manifested, presenced, individually in our own lives according to that personal, individual, apprehension. Presenced, for example, in our compassion, in our honour, by a personal loyal love, and in that appreciation of innocence and of the numinous that inclines us, as individuals, to reject all prejudice and to distance ourselves from that pride, that certainty-of-knowing about ourselves and those presumptions we make about others, which are so redolent of, and which so presence and have so presenced, the patriarchal ethos." {13}

Extremism and racism, therefore, are understood in Myatt's philosophy in relation to hubris and enantiodromia:

> "Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about." {14}
>
> "For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." {19}

Conclusion

In his seminal and scholarly essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* {19}, Myatt places the ethics of his philosophy in the context of the theories of ethics postulated by Christianity, by Islam, and by the proponents of the modern State. He concludes, in respect of his philosophy and its ethics, that:

> "The alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-

> mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei. This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment."

However, this answer is contingent on understanding, via empathy and pathei-mathos, not only 'the illusion of ipseity' {16} - the 'separation-of-otherness' - but also the cosmic perspective and thus the temporary nature of all our human manufactured forms, categories, and abstractions, for according to Myatt:

> "There has been, as there still is, at least in my view, a failure to appreciate two things. Firstly, the causal (the mortal) nature of all forms: from institutions, governments, laws, States, nations, movements, societies, organizations, empires, to leaders and those embodying in some manner the authority, the volksgeist, the ideations, the principles, the aspirations, of their time. Secondly, and possibly most important of all, that what is muliebral cannot be embodied in some organization or movement, or in some *-ism*, or in any causal form – and certainly cannot be expressed via the medium of words, whether spoken or written – without changing it, distorting it, from what it is into some-thing else. For the muliebral by its very φύσις is personal, individual, in nature and only presenced in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot be the object of a supra-personal aspiration and thus should not be 'idealized' or even be the subject of an endeavour to express it in some principles or principles (political or otherwise), or by some axiom or axioms, or by some dogma. For all such things – forms and words included – are manifestations, a presencing, of what is, in φύσις, masculous and temporal. Or, expressed more simply, the muliebral presences and manifests what is a-causal – what, in the past, has often inclined us to appreciate the numinous – while the masculous presences and manifests what is causal, temporal, and what in the past has often inclined us toward hubris and being egoistic." {13}

Myatt's comprehensive philosophy - propounded in various writings between 2012 and 2014 and which he recently described as being just his personal weltanschauung rather than a philosophy {20} - thus provides an interesting, intriguing, and insightful if iconoclastic, analysis of extremism and contemporary society as well as offering an understandable ethics centred on

personal honour, a rather mystical ontology, and a somewhat mystical answer to the question of existence; and although his philosophy certainly deserves to be more widely studied and more widely appreciated, it will doubtless - given Myatt's outré and controversial life - continue to be neglected for many, many, decades to come.

Notes

{1} (a) Barnett, Antony. *Right here, right now*, The Observer, February 9, 2003. (b) Michael, George. *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, 2006, p. 142ff.

{2} *Searchlight*, July 2000.

{3} Amis, Martin. *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157

{4} (a) Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2. (b) Wistrich, Robert S. *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.

{5} (a) Myatt, David. *Myngath - Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. 978-1484110744. (b) Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{6} Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is described in the following three published collections of his essays: (a) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642. (b) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. 978-1502396105. (c) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484097984

The three collections of essays are also available, as of October 2014 and as pdf files, from his weblog at http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/

{7} Of the virtue of personal honour, Myatt writes that it

> "presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]
>
> [For] such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develope what is

essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings.*

{8} Myatt, David. *Let Us Then Try What Love Can Do*. 2012. e-text.

{9} *The Development of the Numinous Way*. The essay is included, as an appendix, in the printed version of his autobiography *Myngath*, 978-1484110744

{10} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{12} *Some Personal Musings On Empathy In Relation to the Philosophy of πάθει μάθος*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{13} *Some Questions For DWM*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{14} *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642

{15} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{16} See: (a) *Toward Understand The Acausal*, and (b) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. Both essays are included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{17} Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{18} Regarding 'the culture of pathei-mathos' - a key part of his philosophy - see Myatt's 2014 essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, which is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 978-1502396105

{19} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

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Part Two: Humility, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

The prevailing character of David Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is evident in one of his most recent essays, for he writes:

> "What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei- mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings.
>
> Indeed, the more I reflect upon my (perhaps pretentiously entitled) 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' the more I reminded of so many things..." {1}

The character is that of a person who, aware and accepting of their past mistakes, is presenting the conclusions of many years of personal contemplation about such metaphysical and personal matters as interest them, which conclusions they qualify with a proviso of fallibility. The ethos of Myatt's philosophy is therefore both in tone and in content redolent of the mystic, but of a mystic who - perhaps because of his extremist past - is well aware of the causes and consequences of suffering:

> "For me, there is a knowing of how limited and fallible my knowledge and understanding are, combined with an intangible intimation of some-thing possibly existing which is so abstruse that any and all attempts - at least by me - to meld it into words, and thus form and confine it into some idea or ideas, would miss or distort its essence. An intimation of what terms such as 'acausal' and 'numinous' (and even θεός/θεοί) do little to describe, hinting as such terms do of externalities - of an 'out there' - whereas this some-thing is an intrinsic part of us, connecting us to all life, human, terran, and otherwise, and thus reveals our φύσις - our relation to beings and Being - behind the appearance that is our conception of our separate self. An intimation thus of our brief causality of mortal life being only one momentary microcosmic presencing of that-which we it seems have a faculty to apprehend, and a that-which which lives-on both before and after our brief

moment of apprehended causal life.

Yet this some-thing that I sense is no mystical divinity of a supra-personal love to be saught individually and which, if found or gifted to us, eremitically removes us from the mortal pains and joys of life. Suffering, and the pain so caused, are real; and if we ourselves are unafflicted, others are not and may never be so unafflicted if we humans do not or cannot fundamentally change." {2}

It is therefore not surprising, given this mysticism, that humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Of humility, Myatt writes that he is using the term

"in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace." {3}

This passage is notable for two reasons. First, for the fact that the virtue of humility is - along with the other personal moral qualities of Myatt's philosophy - the result of that 'acausal knowing' that Myatt considers both pathei-mathos and empathy can provide; and second, for his use of ancient Greek terminology, a usage which hints that his mysticism - his philosophy - is influenced by, or is a modern manifestation of, an ancient paganism rather than part of the Christian mystical and contemplative traditions.

Myatt himself acknowledges this pagan influence:

"The philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture, an appreciation that led me to translate works by Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer, and involved me in a detailed

consideration of the weltanschauung of individuals such as Heraclitus (insofar as such weltanschauungen are known from recorded sayings and surviving books).

Given this appreciation, and as the name suggests, the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." {4}

Acausal Knowing and Pathei Mathos

In a recent précis of his philosophy Myatt enumerates the three fundamentals of his epistemology:

" a. The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

b. Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and which empathic knowing thus cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social.

c. Describing a human, and world-wide and ancestral, 'culture of pathei-mathos', and which culture of pathei-mathos could form part of Studia Humanitatis and thus of that education that enables we

> human beings to better understand our own φύσις." {1}

Thus, for Myatt, knowledge and understanding of Reality - of beings and Being, and of our own relation to beings and Being - requires us to use or develop our faculty of empathy (of sympatheia with other living beings, human and otherwise) as well as both studying and appreciating our 'aeonic' human culture of pathei-mathos and learning via our own experiences, suffering, and grief (our own pathei-mathos). The latter of which - that is, pathei-mathos - naturally not only cultivates a certain personal humility but also means that we cannot hope to know and understand Reality - we cannot discover wisdom - unless and until we ourselves have a certain experience of the vicissitudes of life.

Given (i) that the acausal knowing that empathy reveals,

> "is a direct and personal – an individual – revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming or causality or the assumption of a primal cause, and which knowing, being individual in φύσις and concerned with living beings, cannot be abstracted out from the living personal moment of the perceiveration. Thus, such a perceiveration – in respect of other human beings – does not and cannot involve and does not and cannot lead to any of the following: (i) any personal claim regarding possessing ‘the truth’ about some-thing; (ii) no ‘correct way or praxis’ or dogma or ideology which are assumed or believed to be applicable to anyone else; (iii) no understanding of or assumption of knowledge about others on the basis of assigning those others to some category or to some abstract form. Instead, there is only an intuition of the moment concerning one’s own φύσις and thus a wordless individual revealing of – a numinous knowing concerning – one’s own being and of one’s own relation to Being and to other living beings" {5}

and given (ii) the necessity of (a) pathei-mathos and (b) studying and learning from our aeonic human culture of pathei-mathos, and (ii) given the personal virtues - such as compassion, humility, and a personal honour - that are engendered by such acausal knowing {6}, such a study, and such a pathei-mathos, then it is my view that Myatt's whole philosophy can be summarized as a guide to living in an honourable, and a particular type of pagan, way.

For, of the knowing and understanding that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal, Myatt writes:

> "Empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, myths, legends, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for a balance, for ἁρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.
>
> As a used and a developed faculty, the perception that empathy provides is of undivided ψυχή and of the emanations of ψυχή, of our

> place in the Cosmic Perspective: of how we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life; and how other mortals and other living beings interact with us and can affect us, in a good or a harmful way.
>
> Empathy thus involves a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being *is*, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections. In a simple way, empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between *them and us* – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself." {4}
>
> "The numinous sympathy - *συμπάθεια* (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy." {6}

For, regarding personal honour, Myatt writes that it:

> "presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]
>
> Such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develope what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {1}

For, regarding paganism, Myatt - quoting Cicero - writes that, correctly understood (that is, in the classical sense), it is:

> "An apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceiveration that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of

> the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." {7}

An Honourable, Paganus, And Cultured, Way of Life

What Myatt has developed in his philosophy of pathei-mathos is, essentially, a contemporary mystical 'paganus' philosophy in the classical tradition, and thus one which dispenses with all the unnecessary accretions, and misunderstandings, of the past century that have become attached to 'modern paganism'. For at the heart of Myatt's individualistic paganism are the virtues of personal honour, of learning, of education, of culture, of self-restraint [εὐταξία] and of duty, for:

> "this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." {7}

Which is why Myatt's paganus philosophy emphasises wu-wei {8}, and tolerance; and why it is (i) concerned, not with politics or reforming society through some -ism or -ology or via some revolution violent or otherwise, but rather with the individual - with their interior life, with their personal interaction with others, with the numinosity of love {9}, with honourable living - and (ii) concerned with the individual agreeing to Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ {10}.

Thus:

> "There is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local [communal] level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.
>
> In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal

> virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.
>
> Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example." {11}

In effect, therefore, Myatt's philosophy, with its specific (if not unique) epistemology, and its virtues such as that of a personal honour, leads to:

> "An understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.
>
> An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human." {12}

For it is living in such an honourable way, with such an understanding, that can provide the individual with opportunities to experience, and thence learn from, of the vicissitudes of life because such a way of honourable living means - as I mentioned in Part One - the person being prepared in the immediacy of the moment, and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable, to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that means their own death.

Given that living in such an honourable way with such an understanding was, for thousands of years, the essence of paganism, Myatt is be commended for developing a contemporary mystical paganus philosophy.

R. Parker
2014

Notes

{1} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 978-1502396105

{2} *A Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*. 2014. The essay is included in the 2014 compilation whose title is taken from the title of that essay: *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*. 2012.

{4} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

It is obvious from Myatt's writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos that by the term 'Hellenic culture' he sometimes means the culture of ancient Greece. He thus - perhaps pedantically, perhaps idiosyncratically - sometimes eschews the relatively modern division of ancient Greek culture into a 'classical' period and a 'Hellenistic' period, although - confusingly - in some of his writings he does make such a distinction. As often, what he means by Hellenic is provided by the context.

{5} *Toward Understand The Acausal*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{6} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

{7} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{8} In his *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2012, and included as an 'appendix of terms' in his book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt writes:

> "Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

> In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

{9} Myatt ends his autobiography, *Myngath*, by writing that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all."

{10} Myatt approvingly quotes this saying - attributed to Jesus of Nazareth - in his 2013 essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

{12} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

V. Classical Paganism And A New Metaphysics

In November of 2017 Myatt published his book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* in which he described his view of the difference between Christianity and the paganism of Ancient Greece and Rome and set out to, in his words, develope that "paganism in a metaphysical way, beyond the deities of classical mythos."

This was followed a month later by his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* and in which iconoclastic work he provided his answers to particular metaphysical questions such as whether Christianity really is a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, "then what non-Christian alternatives – such as a paganus metaphysics – exist, and what is the foundation of such an

alternative.”

While these books are not expositions of his philosophy they nevertheless provide interesting and relevant insights into Christianity and classical paganism as well as illuminate particular aspects of his own philosophy. For instance, in *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. In *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* he writes that "the quintessence of such a weltanschauung, of the paganus ethos, is that ethics are presenced in and by particular living individuals, not in some written text whether philosophical or otherwise, not by some proposed schemata, and not in some revelation from some deity."

In both books he makes use of the Greek term καλὸς κἀγαθός stating, in *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, that this

> "means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character."

In *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that

> "καλὸς κἀγαθός is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do [...]
>
> [T]he virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous."

Which in my view neatly sums up his philosophy of pathei-mathos, particularly given his statement that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral, and that

> "a muliebral presencing is or would be manifest [in] muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural."

As he notes in his short essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* {1}, "the faculty of

empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion."

He thus outlines a new 'pagan' metaphysics, or rather provides an understandable description of his own weltanschauung, which is

> "of we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies.
>
> An awareness of all these connexions is awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous, for these connexions, being acausal, are affective: that is, we are inclined by our physis (whether we apprehend it or not) to have an influence on that which, or those whom, the connexion is to or from. For what we do or do not do, consciously or otherwise, affects or can affect the cosmos and thus the other livings beings which exist in the cosmos, and it is a conscious awareness of connexions and acausal affects, with their causal consequences, which reason, perceiverance, and empathy make us - or can make us - aware of. Which awareness may incline us toward acting, and living, in a noble way, with what is noble known or experienced, discovered, through and because of (i) the personal virtue of honour, evident as honour is in fairness, manners and a balanced demeanour, and (ii) the wordless knowing of empathy, manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance.
>
> For Being is also, and importantly, presenced - manifest to us, as mortals possessed of reason, empathy, and perceiverance - through certain types of individuals and thus through the particular ways of living that nurture or encourage such individuals. These types of individuals are those who have empathy and who live and if necessary die by honour and thus who have nobility of character." {2}

Those "certain types of individuals" who presence Being are of course those who manifest καλὸς κἀγαθός, and thus those who, in Myatt's words, manifest chivalry, manners, gentrice romance; and the muliebral virtues, {3} which virtues include "empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion" as well as "the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions." {4}

JR Wright

2018

{1} The essay is included here as Appendix III.

{2} *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, Epilogos.

{3} *From Mythoi To Empathy.*

{4} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, chapter III.

Appendix I

A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

> "...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
> By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
> Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
> Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
> And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονίη, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many

modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέᾳ/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκα (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδρομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather

irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

> χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ᾽ ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
> σημαινομένου χρῆται.

David Myatt
2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. Included in C*orpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017. 978-1976452369.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay in included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is included as an appendix to *Towards Understanding Physis*.

Appendix II

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

> σὺ δ᾽ ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ᾽ ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
> ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
> 215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς
> ἐγκύρσας ἄτῃσιν: ὁδὸς δ᾽ ἑτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
> κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ᾽ ὑπὲρ Ὕβριος ἴσχει
> ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω
>
> You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
> Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
> Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
> The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
> For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
> Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.
>
> Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

> Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.
>
> How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of

ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθὸν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθὸν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrice romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

David Myatt
January 2018

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἢ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

Appendix III

From Mythoi To Empathy
Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceiveration, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceiveration, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

> "the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of

συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

> "is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its

assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

David Myatt
January 2018

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion,*

> "One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

> Religions thus tend to develope an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculous, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2017. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis – Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation – "soundness of mind, moderation" – which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

> "The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.
>
> For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion

that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

Appendix IV

Preface
from *One Perceiveration*

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book The *Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular

philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέᾳ/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceiveration - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata - and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθὸν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κἀγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character. But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Pœmandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional

Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have [in the *One Perceiveration* compilation] added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the Introduction to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt
2020
Second Edition

Source: https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism/one-perceiveration/

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017, 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on Ιερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

> In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α: ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾗ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικὴ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.
>
> Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/

[5] In respect of physis, refer to my essay *The Concept Of Physis*,

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/

Appendix VI

Physis And Being

An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

> "empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend

to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and pathei-mathos as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or

not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, wordlessly - sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites - uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presenced - in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being - is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a meson - μέσον [9] - with the potentiality to change, to develope) and thus which (i) is not - as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam - a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion - our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings - also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presenced in us but as capable of changing - unfolding, evolving - in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presenced by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεὸς (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of livings beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being - the cosmic order, the κόσμος - itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presenced in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός,

> "which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate

> physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

> "not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κἀγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κἀγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new civitas, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presenced in a practical manner in the world.

David Myatt
2019

This essay is a revised and edited version of a reply sent to an academic who enquired about the philosophy of pathei-mathos

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Notes

[1] I use the term physis - φύσις - ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin denotare - not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of pathei-mathos the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέᾳ, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in Kratylus 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of physis) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the physis of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something - as for example Plato's ἰδέᾳ/εἶδος - but instead the physis of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α,

> ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾗ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικὴ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ
>
> Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

> φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν
>
> I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a changement - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

> "thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

> Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

> How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

Appendix V

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the pathei-mathos which such literature – and often the associated mythoi – can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, in the melding of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) and τὸ ἀγαθὸν (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

> Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
> Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰών.
>
> But the Sophia of the theos is what?
> The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, τὸ καλὸν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty – the beautiful – but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in Hellenica, Book V, 3.9,

> πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

> Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider “a classical education” – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

> ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες
>
> The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other’s dying with the other dying in that other’s life. [3]

David Myatt
December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html
[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεὸς – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεὸς is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.
[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

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All translations by DWM

Appendix VII

The Concept of Physis

Towards Understanding Physis

Since the concept of physis - φύσις - is central to my philosophy of pathei-mathos, it seems apposite to offer a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from Ancient Greece and used as it is by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurring as it does in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ιερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

As I mentioned in my translation of Aristotle, Metaphysics 1015α [1] - and elsewhere - physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develope. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέᾳ/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

> "This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...
>
> [For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pnuema, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiveration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiveration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...
>
> When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate:

> "The divine is all of that mixion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis
> For Physis is presenced in the divine." [7]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

As mentioned elsewhere, what I have termed the philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) is just my weltanschauung, developed between 2011 and 2013 after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) 'numinous way' [8].

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

> (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature '- that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions [10], both of which conceal physis;
> (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [11] is a concealment of that relationship;
> (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
> (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;

(v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings [12].

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological and rooted - as is my philosophy of pathei-mathos - in the paganus culture of classical, and Hellenic, Greece.

David Myatt
March 2015

Notes

[1] I have appended to this essay my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See my Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, included in https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὂν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*, in https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf

[5] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] Pœmandres 16-18.

[7] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

[8] Refer to my *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*, 2012.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness* in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

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